

I call on all Members of Congress, on both sides of the aisle and in both Chambers, to join with me to ensure that the Office of Government Information Services is promptly established and fully funded within the National Archives. The American people have waited for more than a decade for this office and for the other historic FOIA reforms contained in the OPEN Government Act. They should not be forced to wait any longer.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of a letter from a coalition of more than 40 different open government organizations that strongly oppose moving the Office of Government Information Services to the Department of Justice be printed in the RECORD.

Congress must work to beat back the administration's ill-advised attempts to undermine the intent of Congress in a bill that this President signed into law. In the coming weeks and months, I will be working with other advocates of FOIA in the Senate to do just that.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

FEBRUARY 6, 2008.

Hon. ROBERT C. BYRD, Chairman

Hon. THAD COCHRAN, Ranking Member,  
*Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate,*  
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR CHAIRMAN BYRD AND RANKING MEMBER COCHRAN: We are writing to express our concern that the Bush Administration's proposed FY 2009 budget attempts to repeal a section of law and shift funding for a new Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to the Department of Justice (DOJ). President Bush signed the Openness Promotes Effectiveness in our National Government Act (OPEN Government Act), which creates OGIS at NARA, a mere five weeks ago. We urge you to ensure the President's budget reflects congressional intent and the explicit mandate of the statute as the budgetary process unfolds.

Currently, the president's budget proposes: "The Department of Justice shall carry out the responsibilities of the office established in 5 U.S.C. 552(h), from amounts made available in the Department of Justice appropriation for General Administration Salaries and Expenses. In addition, subsection (h) of section 552 of title 5, United States Code, is hereby repealed, and subsections (i) through (l) are redesignated (h) through (k). (Commerce, Justice, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008.)" (Section 519 of Title V of the Department of Commerce; p. 239 of the Appendix)

The OPEN Government Act (P.L. 110-175) established OGIS specifically at NARA. It did so as a result of congressional findings that interests promoted by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), as well as American traditions and ideals regarding the value of an informed citizenry and the legitimacy of representative government, were being insufficiently served by the existing system of agency practices and implementation, in which DOJ has been the lead agency for 30 years. Additionally, since it is the responsibility of the Department to defend its government-agency clients in litigation brought by requestors, there is a built-in conflict of interest in vesting DOJ with responsibilities to resolve FOIA disputes informally and to hold agencies accountable for FOIA implementation. Congress specifically directed the

creation of an ombudsman office apart from the Department of Justice for mediation of contested requests, thus reducing the amount, and concomitant costs, of litigation—burdens whose reduction would be beneficial to all. The new office, established with strong bipartisan support in both Houses of Congress, also has the critical mandate to evaluate agency implementation of FOIA with a disinterested eye.

We strongly oppose this effort to use the budget process to rewrite the law, undermining congressional intent and flouting a specific statutory mandate. We urge you to appropriate necessary funds to establish the Office of Government Information Services in the National Archives and Records Administration, as your legislation wisely requires, and, to reinforce the intent of the OPEN Government Act, reject Section 519 of the proposed budget.

Sincerely,

Access Reports, Inc.; American Association of Law Libraries; American Association of Publishers; American Civil Liberties Union; American Library Association; American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression; Association of Research Libraries; Bill of Rights Defense Committee; Californians Aware; Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington; Citizens for Sunshine; Coalition on Political Assassinations; DownsizeDC.org, Inc.; Electronic Frontier Foundation; Essential Information; Feminists for Free Expression; Government Accountability Project; Indiana Coalition for Open Government; The James Madison Project; Justice Through Music; League of Women Voters of the U.S.;

Liberty Coalition; Maine Association of Broadcasters; Minnesota Coalition on Government Information; National Coalition Against Censorship; National Freedom of Information Coalition; The National Security Archives; 9/11 Research Group; OMB Watch; Open Society Policy Center; OpenTheGovernment.org; PEN American Center; Project On Government Oversight; Public Citizen; Readthebill.org Foundation; The Rutherford Institute; Society of Professional Journalists; Society of Professional Journalists Montana Professional Chapter; Special Libraries Association; Sunlight Foundation; United States Bill of Rights Foundation; Velvet Revolution; Washington Coalition for Open Government.

#### AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HEMATOLOGY

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I congratulate the American Society of Hematology—ASH—on its 50th anniversary and to pay tribute to the contributions they have made in preventing and eliminating blood related diseases.

The society has grown substantially from its 200 members at its inception in 1958, to over 15,000 members presently, and is recognized as the world's premier organization in research promotion, clinical care, education, training, and advocacy in the field of hematology.

Society members consist of practitioners and researchers who have been able to translate Federal research dollars into effective treatments for millions of people afflicted with diseases that were at one time untreatable and

fatal. The blood and blood-related diseases studied and treated by hematologists include disorders such as leukemia and lymphoma, thrombosis, anemia and bleeding, and congenital disorders such as sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, and thalassemia. The advancements in remedies of these disorders are a direct result of the continuing efforts made by the AHS.

I sustained an episode with Hodgkin's lymphoma cancer 2 years ago. That trauma, that illness, I think, could have been prevented had that war on cancer declared by the President Nixon in 1970 been prosecuted with sufficient intensity. All of us know people who have been stricken by fatal diseases and many other maladies. It is my hope that other organizations will use the success of the AHS as an example in contributing to this Nation's desire for finding cures for the most fatal diseases.

As chairman, and now ranking member of the appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, I have been an ardent supporter of securing Federal funds for the National Institutes of Health the crown jewel of the Federal Government, maybe the only jewel of the Federal Government. Health is the country's No. 1 capital asset, and the American Society of Hematology has contributed to its success.

Hematologists have been instrumental in pioneering the use of hydroxyurea in the treatment of sickle cell disease and have developed the first successful cure of childhood leukemia. Moreover, hematologists were responsible for the research that led to, Gleevec, the first anticancer drug developed to target a molecular problem that causes chronic myelogenous leukemia.

The American Society of Hematology has played an important role in the unprecedented growth and advancement of hematology research. With so many great successes over the past 50 years, I am confident the next 50 years will bring ASH and its over 15,000 members even more accomplishments in treating and eliminating blood diseases.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### COMMENDING ESTHER G. KEE

• Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, it is a privilege for me to honor Mrs. Esther G. Kee who is retiring as president of the United States-Asia Institute which she cofounded with the late Joji Konoshima in 1979, with the encouragement and support of then-President Jimmy Carter.

The objectives of the United States-Asia Institute are to promote better understanding between the United States and Asia, to conduct work and educational visits to Asia for Members of Congress and their staff, to maintain close ties with Asian diplomatic missions, to organize international and